

**Ad Hoc Committee on Redistricting  
Orientation Meeting  
September 29th, 2021  
6:00-8:00 PM  
Zoom and Sharon Bushor Conference Room, 149 Church St.**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:**

Committee Members: Richard Hillyard, Ward 1; George Love, Ward 2; Chris Haessly, Ward 3; Jim Holway, Ward 4; Greg Shepler, Ward 5; Rama Kocherlakota, Ward 6; Robert Bristow-Johnson, Ward 7; Anne Breña, Ward 8

City Councilors: Sarah Carpenter

City Staff: Brian Pine, CEDO; Dan Richardson, City Attorney; David White, City Planning; Diane Meyerhoff, City Consultant; Jay Appleton, IT; Kirsten Wilson, CEDO; Meagan Tuttle, City Planning; Phet Keomanyvanh, CEDO

Public: Bill Keogh; Keegan Carter; Keith Pillsbury; Lea Terhune; Mike Hoey, Local 22 and 44 News

**Meeting convened at 6:02 PM.**

**I. Welcome, Introduction of Committee Members and Public Forum**

- a. Director Pine thanked those for attending and opened up for introductions by all in attendance.

**II. Committee Purpose - Brian Pine, CEDO Director**

- a. Richard Hillyard asked why Bill Keogh was not in attendance. Director Pine explained that Bill Keogh, Ward 5 had to step down from the Committee as a former City Councilor. Greg Shepler, the elected Ward 5 alternate, has taken his place.
- b. Chris Haessly, Ward 3 is in a similar position as a former School Board member.
- c. The Committee's charge is to host at least two public forums and write a report for City Council reflecting public input.
- d. The City of Burlington has hired consultant Diane Meyerhoff to facilitate the public meetings as well as provide support writing the Committee's report.
- e. Director Pine explained the steps following the submission of the report, including the multiple maps that Jay Appleton will make for City Council based on the Committee's report using ArcGIS.
- f. Discussion ensued on the need for former elected officials to be separate from the Committee, with review of the language of the Resolution that created the Ad Hoc Committee by City Attorney Richardson. Councilor Carpenter explained the intent of the Resolution.

### **III. Redistricting Overview with Q&A - Dan Richardson, City Attorney**

- a. City Attorney Richardson continued the presentation, reviewing what redistricting is, the constitutional requirements for it, and the traditional redistricting factors.
  - i. Richardson explained discrimination and gerrymandering, providing examples on “cracking,” spreading a constituent group across multiple districts, and “packing,” concentrating a constituent group into just one district, both of which are done to minimize a group’s voting power.
  - ii. Richardson specified that students are not a protected class.
- b. City Attorney Richardson reviewed the 2010 Evaluation Criteria utilized last redistricting process, as well as considerations for 2021, including: incumbency, the number of wards and districts, neighborhoods, even vs. odd council seats, at large Council seats, and multiple representatives per ward.

### **IV. Preliminary 2020 Census Data with Q&A - Meagan Tuttle, Principal Planner and Jay Appleton, Senior Programmer/Analyst**

- a. Principal Planner Tuttle presented highlights from the preliminary 2020 Census data. These included:
  - i. The City’s population is now 44,743 people.
  - ii. The 2020 census shows increases in BIPOC population groups. This is in part due to demographic changes in the City, as well as the Census altering its questions in 2020, which better provided community members with the opportunity to share their true identity.
  - iii. All wards have increased notably in population, except 3 and 7. Wards 1 and 6 saw the greatest increases.
  - iv. Tuttle explained the definition of ideal size used in City redistricting, which is determined by dividing the City population by the number of voting districts.
  - v. The 2020 data by wards shows that we need to pursue redistricting. The overall plan deviation is 21.4%, which is well over the 10% allowed.
  - vi. Jay Appleton explained an error in the Census that miscalculated the number of beds in Redstone Hall on UVM’s campus. This census block has had to be reviewed with students reassigned from neighboring census blocks. A similar error within UVM housing was also made in 2010 that was discovered by the State.
- b. Tuttle answered questions, including how UVM students being sent home during COVID-19 impacted Census distribution and accuracy.

### **V. Planning Discussion on Public Meetings and Community Input Process**

- a. Director Pine specified that the Committee’s report is due to City Council on November 8<sup>th</sup>. The Committee should strive for at least two if not three hybrid public meetings in North, Central and South End locations.
- b. Chris Haessly stressed the need for a survey to best maximize public input beyond attendance at the public meetings and Committee members discussed mediums for accessibility, including online and mail distribution.

- i. Richard Hillyard was involved in distributing a preliminary survey to Ward 1 residents in advance of this meeting via Front Porch Forum. Hillyard shared the questions and summarized the approximately 20 responses received.
  - ii. Hillyard will share the Ward 1 [survey](#) with the rest of the Committee to be built on for a City-wide survey. The 2021 considerations slide in City Attorney Richardson's presentation could also be utilized.
- c. Committee members discussed how to distill comments at public meetings into quantifiable data. Community members could attend any meeting in the City and also fill out the survey. Public meetings should be set at varying times to accommodate service workers in the City as well as other public meetings, such as the NPAs or City Council.
- d. Committee members should strive to attend each of the public meetings. Education is another important aspect of the Committee's work, so that the public understands the parameters of redistricting and how redrawing ward boundaries affects Council and School Board seats.
- e. NPAs could delegate an agenda item toward redistricting at their upcoming meetings, if not have a special or All Ward meeting.
- f. Consultant Diane Meyerhoff will need all public meetings to be held on or prior to October 20<sup>th</sup> in order to finish the report by November 8<sup>th</sup> for Council.
  - i. Committee members expressed concerns with the current timeline and how to best maximize the time currently available.
  - ii. City Attorney Richardson explained that Committee members are welcome to host their own meetings with the public, such as coffee chats, so long as there isn't a quorum of Committee members present. Feedback from these type of meetings could be utilized in writing the final report.
- g. Tuttle recommended creating a sub-committee to work on the City-wide survey and setting a near timeline to review the questions.
  - i. Chris Haessly and George Love agreed to work on the survey together.
  - ii. City Attorney Richardson explained open meeting law and what constitutes as public business. A quorum in this Committee would be 5 or more members. Email discussion on survey questions with a quorum of Committee members is not permissible.
- h. The Committee deliberated on whether to plan to include feedback in their report to Council on the limitations of the timeline or to request an extension now.
  - i. Jim Holway made a motion to request a reasonable extension from City Council and to let City staff determine what precise calendar date would be reasonable based on later redistricting deadlines.
    - 1. Vote: 7 Ayes - Rama Kocherlakota, Robert Bristow-Johnson, George Love, Anne Breña, Chris Haessly, Jim Holway and Greg Shepler.
    - 1 Abstention: Richard Hillyard. Motion passes.

**VI. Summary of Next Steps**

- a. City Staff will follow up from this meeting to share proposed dates for three upcoming public meetings.
- b. Sub-committee will work on survey questions to be circulated city-wide on Front Porch Forum by City Staff.
- c. Councilor Carpenter will report back to City Council the request from this Committee for a reasonable extension.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM.**

Minutes submitted by Kirsten Wilson, CEDO.